

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended) A method for communicating from a printer to a remote support location, comprising:
receiving ~~an affirmative~~ a first request for ~~an~~ assistance from a user of a printer:
said first request having been triggered by said user's engaging an external physical button on said printer;
generating and transmitting a second request for assistance to a remote support location in response to said ~~user's~~ first request; and
providing an indication to said user that ~~a~~ said second request ~~for assistance~~ has been transmitted.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 at least one step of which is conditioned on verifying authorization of said user.
3. (original) The method of claim 2 where said verification includes biometric authentication.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 where said verification occurs at said printer.
5. (original) The method of claim 2 where said verification occurs at said remote location.
6. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 where:
said remote location includes a computer sending a print job to said printer;
said print job being suspended until said user is ~~at~~ physically at said printer;
and
said second request for assistance includes a verification that user is physically at said printer.
7. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
receiving a response from said remote location; and

conducting an interactive communication between said user and said remote location.

8. (original) The method of claim 7 further comprising conditioning said interactive communication on authorization of said remote location.
9. (original) The method of claim 7 where said interactive communication is performed using VoIP.
10. (original) The method of claim 7 where said interactive communication includes allowing said remote location to interrogate said printer.
11. (original) The method of claim 10 where said interactive communication includes establishing a service call for said printer.
12. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 where:
said printer acts as a gateway to at least another device connected thereto; and
said second request includes information of said another device.
13. (original) The method of claim 12 where said information pertains to a print spooler feeding said printer from said another device.
14. (original) The method of claim 12 where said another device includes a consumer electronic device.
15. (currently amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising receiving said ~~requested~~ information of said another device in response to a user-initiated download request.
16. (original) The method of claim 12:
where said another device includes a computer driving said printer; and
further comprising: receiving an updated driver for said computer, and
transmitting said driver to said computer.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
before at least said transmitting, attempting to locally resolve a problem at said printer; and
transmitting said second request in response to a failure of local resolution.
18. (original) The method of claim 1 where said remote location includes a service establishment independent from an owner of said printer.
19. (original) The method of claim 1 implemented in a facsimile machine.
20. (original) The method of claim 1 implemented in a copier.
21. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 where said second request includes information pertaining to characteristics of a print job being processed.
22. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 where said second request includes information pertaining to a physical status of said printer.
23. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 where said second request includes identification information of said printer.
24. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising providing an indication of unavailability while said printer remains out of service.
25. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 where said second request includes audiovisual information captured from said user.
26. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of said printer and said remote location is protected by a firewall, and further comprising communicating between said printer and said remote location via a channel in said firewall.
27. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium for communicating from a printer to a remote support location, comprising computer logic instructions that, when executed:

receive ~~an affirmative~~ a first request for ~~an~~ assistance from a user of a printer:
said first request having been triggered by said user's engaging an
external physical button on said printer;
generate and transmit a second request for assistance to a remote support
location in response to said ~~user's~~ first request; and
provide an indication to said user that a said second request ~~for assistance~~ has
been transmitted.

28. (original) The computer-readable medium of claim 27 further comprising
logic instructions that when executed:
receive a response from said remote location; and
conduct an interactive communication between said user and said remote
location.
29. (original) The computer-readable medium of claim 28 further comprising
logic instructions for conditioning said interactive communication on authorization of
said remote location.
30. (original) The computer-readable medium of claim 27 further comprising
logic instructions for implementing VoIP communications.
31. (currently amended) The computer-readable medium of claim 27 where:
said printer acts as a gateway to at least another device connected thereto; and
said second request includes information of said another device.
32. (currently amended) Apparatus for communicating from a printer to a remote
support location, comprising:
means for receiving ~~an affirmative~~ a first request for ~~an~~ assistance from a user
of a printer:
said first request having been triggered by said user's engaging an
external physical button on said printer;
means for generating and transmitting a second request for assistance to a
remote support location in response to said ~~user's~~ first request; and

means for providing an indication to said user that a said second request ~~for assistance~~ has been transmitted.

33. (currently amended) A printer capable of communicating with a remote support location, comprising:
- a printer engine;
 - an external physical button configured to be engaged by a user of said printer making an affirmative request for an assistance;
 - request management circuitry for generating and transmitting an assistance request in response to said user's affirmative request; and
 - a network interface for transmitting said assistance request to a remote location capable of communicating with said printer.
34. (original) The printer of claim 33 further comprising authentication circuitry for authorization of said user.
35. (original) The printer of claim 33 further comprising:
- receiving a response from said remote location; and
 - conducting an interactive communication between said user and said remote location.
36. (original) The printer of claim 35 further comprising VoIP circuitry for performing said interactive communication.
37. (currently amended) The printer of claim 33 where:
- said printer acts as a gateway to at least another device connected thereto; and
 - said second request includes information of said another device.
38. (currently amended) A method for receiving a communication from a printer at a remote support location, comprising:
- receiving an affirmative request for an assistance from a user of a printer:
 - said request having been triggered by said user's engaging an external physical button on said printer;

establishing an interactive communication over a communications network with said user at said printer.

39. (original) The method of claim 38 further providing authorization of said remote location to said printer.

40. (original) The method of claim 38 where said interactive communication is performed using VoIP.

41. (original) The method of claim 38 where said interactive communication includes interrogation of said printer by said remote location.